



U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS/SAFETY CENTER

4905 5th Ave. Fort Rucker, AL 36362-5363
Comm. (334) 255-3770 Fax (334) 255-2266
<https://safety.army.mil>

Safely sharing the road

BOB VAN ELSBERG
Strategic Communication Directorate
U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center
Fort Rucker, Ala.

While two things can't occupy the same place at the same time, some people try it anyway. When one of those people is a driver and the other a pedestrian, it's pretty obvious who's going to lose.

"During fiscal year 2011, our Army lost 13 Soldiers to pedestrian accidents," said Lt. Col. Scott Wile, driving director at the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center. "Pedestrian safety isn't just the responsibility of the person in the crosswalk; drivers must do their part, too. When they don't, cars dent and people die."

Here are some examples of where drivers failed to live up to their responsibilities:

- A texting driver never saw the Soldier in the crosswalk ahead before hitting him.
- A driver failed to slow down while passing an accident scene and hit a Soldier helping crash victims.
- A driver turning at an intersection hit a Soldier with his pickup's wide side-view mirror.

Pedestrian safety is a nationwide concern. The Utah Department of Public Safety has directly addressed the topic on its website, <http://highwaysafety.utah.gov/>, and offers the following information for drivers.

First, pedestrians always have right of way at crosswalks, including at intersections where crosswalks have not been painted. When approaching a crosswalk, drivers need to stop behind the stop bar.

Second, intersections are perhaps the most dangerous place for pedestrians, as they and drivers share the same section of road in close proximity. Therefore, drivers must check for pedestrians before turning right or left at intersections. Additionally, if a vehicle in an adjacent lane has stopped at a crosswalk, drivers should assume a pedestrian is in that crosswalk and also stop. Drivers need to be aware that larger vehicles such as SUVs, vans, pickups and commercial trucks can block their view of pedestrians in crosswalks.

Finally, it's important to slow down when driving through neighborhoods and around schools or parks. Young children may suddenly dart into your path, possibly from behind parked vehicles, trees or other objects that prevent you from seeing them until they're right in front of you. Also, before crossing over a sidewalk, stop and look both ways for pedestrians.

As a Soldier, you're familiar with the concept of situational awareness and its importance. As a driver, your awareness may be the key to someone else's survival.

For more information on pedestrian safety, visit <https://safety.army.mil>.